

- String or hang interesting objects on the pram hood so that your baby can watch them as she is lying in the pram and enjoying an outing with mummy and daddy!
- The more mature baby likes toys which move and make noise. Therefore, you can hang light rattles on strings which swing and make pleasant noises when your baby swipes at them.

Auditory Development

At one month, the baby will be startled by sudden noises. Unpleasant or loud noises may be stressful to a young baby. We can help by talking softly, closing doors gently or turning down the volume of the radio etc.

Your one-month old baby will usually turn towards the sound of soothing human voices nearby, but not when screaming or feeding. Your baby will also coo responsively to her mother's voice from about five to six weeks old. Therefore, you can talk and sing to her when holding her close to you. This will also help the baby to learn to focus.

At three months, when there are sounds of approaching voices, footsteps, running bath water etc, the baby will turn her eyes and/or head towards the source of the sound. The baby is usually excited about the different types of sounds and may be observed to turn her head from side to side as if searching for the sound. Hence, use different sounds or toys which make a pleasant sound to attract the baby's attention, and also to encourage eye tracking. When the baby attempts to grab at toys that rattle whenever she sees them, she will begin to make the connection between sight, action and sound.

Things to avoid:

- Toys with sharp edges
- Toys small enough to be swallowed, or may cause choking
- Toys made of toxic material

The instructions in this leaflet are not intended to be exhaustive. In specific cases, you may receive different or additional instructions from your doctor. You are advised to follow any specific written or oral instructions given to you by your healthcare provider. **Please ask when in doubt.**

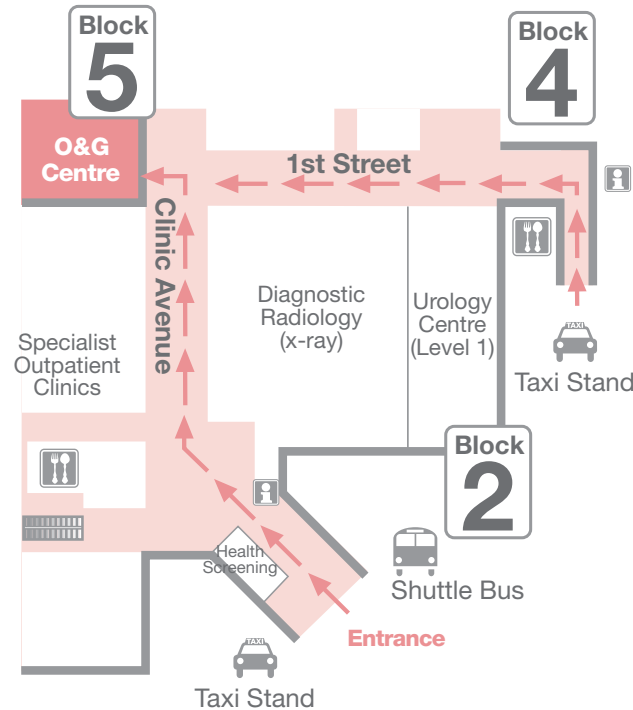
Location Map

SGH Baby And Child Clinic

Block 5 Level 1, O & G Centre

Operating Hours:

Mon - Fri : 9.30am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm



Important Numbers

General Enquiries	6222 3322
Appointment	6321 4377 / 6326 5920

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YOUR GUIDE TO ...

Helping Your Baby Grow



SGH Baby & Child Clinic



Singapore
General Hospital
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Motor Development

One of the tasks of a newborn baby is to learn to control movements of his head, arms, legs and body. These are the building blocks for learning how to sit, crawl, stand, and eventually walk and run. They are also important for fine coordination of small hand muscles to achieve tasks like writing, cutting and dressing.

Development usually progresses from head to foot, with skills involving the head and arms developing before those that involve the legs and feet. Motor control also progresses from the centre of the body outwards, which means that your baby will be able to control his torso before he can manipulate his fingers and toes.

Learning to gain control over the various muscles in his body may be more difficult for a premature baby, who may have less muscle strength to move against the force of gravity.

You may help your baby to learn to control his head and other parts of the body by:

- positioning, and
- playing simple physical games with your baby

Why is Positioning Important?

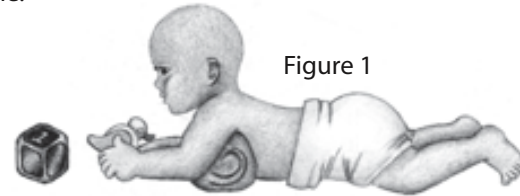
As your baby spends the majority of his initial months lying down, it is important that he is helped to maintain comfortable and good positions that enhance motor development.

Your baby may lie in any one of the three positions: on his back, tummy, or on his side. It is a good idea to put him in a variety of positions as they give the baby the opportunity to use different muscles when he moves.

■ Lying on the tummy

Place a rolled diaper under your baby's chest and hip to help the baby to curl up when lying on the tummy (Figure 1). You can do this several times a day. Only place the baby in this position when you are around.

Entice your baby to lift his head by putting an unbreakable mirror or large picture in front of him, or get down on the floor face-to-face with him. In time, he will be able to raise his head and support his weight on his forearm for quite a long time.



■ Lying on the back

Place your baby on a blanket, and roll both ends so that the head is supported near midline, and his shoulders and hands are brought forward. A rolled diaper may be put under the knees to support the hip in a bent position (Figure 2).

Gradually reduce support as your baby begins to be able to maintain a good position on his own.

When pulling your baby from lying to sitting position, you may also gradually reduce support at his neck and head, as he improves the control of his head. Encourage him to hold his head up to be in line with the rest of the body by getting his attention first, before pulling him to sit (you may start as early as when the baby is six weeks old).



■ Lying on the side

When lying on his side, a rolled blanket behind his head and trunk will keep him tucked in. A smaller roll may be placed in front of your baby's chest and abdomen, over which his top leg may be bent and placed.

■ Other guidelines for positioning:

- When sleeping, swaddle your baby to help keep the tucked-in position. This also gives him the feeling of being cuddled.
- Leave your baby's hands free for his exploration and play. Sucking his fingers or hand is also one way he can calm himself.

Visual Development

The visual development of the infant needs to be stimulating and should not be neglected, even though newborn babies may not be able to see as well as an older baby. Vision is essential for the child to explore the environment and acquire new skills. Therefore, it is important to structure the visual world of the infant to fit her range of vision and enhance visual development.

■ How?

- Cuddle your baby close to you and talk to her.
- Put a fairly large photo of yourself or one of your children at the side of her cot. This will enable the baby to practice focusing on one of her favourite objects: the human face! Another way of getting the baby to learn to focus on human faces is to place a mirror on one side of the cot so that the baby can see her own face and also see it moving.
- The newborn baby is unable to focus on anything further than 25cm from her face. Decorate the side of her cot with brightly coloured pictures within her range of vision.
- Put a mobile over the cot, with a couple of inexpensive items such as balloons or a few household objects (brightly coloured) hung on a coat hanger or on a wooden pole attached to the cot. Ensure that they are securely attached.

